

Minutes of Student Advisory Committee
June 24, 2003

The Board of Education Student Advisory Committee met on June 24, 2003 to develop positions and recommendations for the four areas they have been studying during the 2002-2003 school year. The following members of the committee attended the meeting:

Name of Student	School/Division
Jonathan Cross	Robinson Secondary, Fairfax
Ryan Durham	Tabb High School, York County
Adam Erby	Central High School, Lunenburg
Joshua Goff	Randolph-Henry High School, Charlotte County
Bradley Hinshelwood	Eastern Montgomery High School, Montgomery County
Amanda McMillian	Carver Middle School, Henry County
Jessica Johnson	Providence Middle School, Chesterfield County
Amanda Dorsey	West Point High School, West Point

Board of Education members, Mrs. Susan Genovese and Mrs. Ruby Rogers, met with the students and assisted them in the development of their statements. Group One developed recommendations on expanded career and technical programs. Group Two developed recommendations on preventive remediation for students not passing the Standards of Learning tests. Group three developed recommendations on expanding access to advanced courses through distance learning for students in all areas of the state. Group four developed recommendations on expanding character education beyond elementary school.

Members of the Student Advisory Committee joined the Board of Education at its meeting on June 25, 2003. At that meeting, a spokesperson for each group presented the committee's findings and recommendations on the individual topics. The students were also recognized by the board and commended for their work on the committee.

**Statement from the Student Advisory Committee
of the
Board of Education**

Issue of Discussion:

Opportunities to prepare for pursuit of a technical career

Background:

Though many high school students plan to go to college upon graduation, there is a large segment of the population that either does not or cannot go to college for one reason or another. The issue of career/technical education is very important because it is the school's job to prepare every student for a useful, meaningful career, whether they choose to go to college or not. While there are programs already in place in many areas, the availability of career/technical education is limited, particularly in rural or poverty stricken areas. Often, it is the students in these rural and/or poverty stricken areas that need training in a career or technical field the most.

Position of the Student Advisory Committee and Rationale:

While we realize resources are limited, we feel it is imperative that career opportunities be offered to every student, not just those going to college. We feel the board should issue guidelines to be issued to all school divisions providing recommendations and ideas to assist school divisions, whether individually or collectively, in providing more diverse career and technical opportunities for their students. We would like the board, perhaps in the form of a manual or pamphlet sent to all school divisions, to compile different options for school divisions to expand career and technical educational opportunities, with a particular focus on the rural and poorer areas of the state. In Fairfax County, several of the high schools already have a cosmetology shop in the schools. These students take classes in hair and nail care and run a low cost center right out of the high school that services the community. We would like to see more of these kind of partnerships in other areas of the state. Also, schools could work with local businesses to allow a student to receive high school credit or credit towards professional certification while allowing the student to get real world experience in that field. Also, particularly in Southside and Southwest Virginia, regional partnerships are often employed for a variety of purposes. The same could be done for career/technical centers that offer a broad array of options to a large number of students.

Formal Recommendation of the Student Advisory Committee:

The Board of Education should promote career and technical education to every school division in the state. We believe the board should place an equal emphasis on career/technical education and a college education. We recommend the board work with local school officials from various parts of the state to formulate a plan for each region of the state. The Board of Education should actively promote and encourage school divisions to identify and work with those students who are not on a path to college to ensure that they have a worthwhile and fulfilling career by building regional career/technical centers, promoting partnerships between businesses and local school districts, and placing an equal emphasis on identifying and working with those students who are not going to attend a four year college or university.

Members of the Student Advisory Committee:

Emily Browning
Caryne Clarke
Jonathan Cross
Amanda Dorsey
Ryan Durham
Adam Erby
Joshua Goff
Naaila Gray
Patrick Haley
Bradley Hinshelwood
Jessica Johnson
Amanda McMillian
Jonathan Meade
Ryan Scofield
Catherine Serex
Danielle Wilson

**Statement from the Student Advisory Committee
of the
Board of Education**

Issue of Discussion:

Preventative Remediation

Background:

With the birth of the statewide Standards of Learning program, it is imperative that schools offer a remediation program that will help all students to keep up with the new requirements mandated for graduation. There may be students who require additional assistance to achieve success on Standards of Learning tests. Identification of students and remediation practices vary from school division to school division.

Position of the Student Advisory Committee and Rationale:

- All students receiving below a “C” average in a class should go through an evaluation process to determine if remediation is necessary prior to taking the Standards of Learning tests. All students who fail any Standards of Learning test should go through a similar evaluation process before retaking the test to determine if they need additional instruction. This should be done in order to ensure success for each student as well as the school system.

Formal Recommendations of the Student Advisory Committee:

- The committee recommends that the Board of Education require school divisions to conduct evaluations on all students receiving a below “C” average in any class or having failed any Standards of Learning test, according to Board of Education guidelines, to determine if additional instruction is needed.

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**Statement from the Student Advisory Committee
of the
Virginia Board of Education**

Issue of Discussion:

The issue of access to a variety of courses through distance learning should be considered by the Board of Education because some schools would not have access to these courses without distance learning.

Background:

Distance learning was defined by the group as education provided over a satellite/internet/phone service. Currently, many large schools are able to offer more courses than schools with smaller populations. This gives students from larger schools an advantage over those of the smaller schools. Many times the smaller school does not have the means, ability to hire qualified staff, or enough student interest to justify having a full class. At this time, the Virginia Satellite Education Network (VSEN) offers some courses to the students of the Commonwealth to help solve the previously mentioned problems. However, there are a limited number of courses offered through this medium, and they cannot adapt to the individual needs of students.

Position of the Student Advisory Committee and Rationale:

It is our belief that students should be given the opportunity, through distance learning, to excel in courses that are suited to their needs and interests regardless of the location or size of their school. Our committee has thoroughly researched and studied different methods of obtaining courses. We feel that these courses could help to decrease the opportunity gap between large and small schools. Further, we believe that the Board of Education should become involved in deciding which courses are acceptable based on the policies currently set forth in the Standards of Learning to students in these public schools and how schools will accept the credits awarded. Also, the board should become involved in deciding whether the organization offering the courses is credible or not. We realize that funding is an issue, and the board should look into ways through the General Assembly, as well as the federal government and localities, to provide funding for these programs. Our committee believes that the board should take steps to inform the localities and general public of the availability of the approved programs.

Formal Recommendation of the Student Advisory Committee:

After considering this issue and what should be done, the Student Advisory Committee recommends:

1. The Board of Education should decide whether or not a distance-learning course should be used by schools, and whether or not the specific institution that offers the courses is credible.
2. That funding for distance learning should be explored through localities, the state, and the federal government.
3. The Board of Education should make the localities and general public aware of the availability of distance learning programs.

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**Statement from the Student Advisory Committee
of the
Board of Education**

Issue of Discussion:

Support for character education beyond elementary schools, including addressing problems that can occur in secondary schools

Background:

Character Education is a program in which schools strive to improve the learning environment, promote student achievement, reduce disciplinary problems and develop civic-minded students of high character. This type of program would help to achieve success academically rather than spending time addressing behavior problems. Character education can help make the school climate more positive. The more positive the environment is, the more conducive it is to learning.

Position of the Student Advisory Committee and Rationale:

- **Enhancing Character Education in K-12**

We believe that this type of program should be provided throughout a student's schooling. There should be more emphasis on character education as students go from elementary to secondary schools. As students make the transition from elementary to middle to high school, the need for character education increases. Along with the transition comes an increase in peer pressure, freedom to make decisions and choices, and exposure to the media. The media and peer pressure can promote negative decisions that character education could help prevent students from making. The committee feels that a separate subject should not be created, but that these ideas could be integrated into the everyday classroom and lifestyle of the student.

- **Formal Recommendation(s) of the Student Advisory Committee:**

The committee recommends the following plans for the Board of Education's promotion of a statewide character education system:

1. Express an interest in improving Character Education
2. Create guidelines applicable for all school systems
3. Create a character education website to provide additional resources and information for the general public (perhaps a database to share ideas across the state to discuss various methods)
4. Add a section in the annual report describing the successes of local school division character education to provide information to the board
5. Create a committee to identify current, effective character education methods
6. Provide incentives; establish division awards to those students who display extraordinary characteristics in the field of character education.

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